2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
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A small number of Tongo people have gone yet farther afield in search of a livelihood: to Biun and other peripheral settlements, to Mampurugu, and, increasingly in recent years, to the tempting Eldorado of Ashanti and the Colony. Thus, not all the members of the Tongo branch of Mosuor biis and its accessory lineages live at Tongo at any given time; but within its confines live only members of the sub-clan and their families; and for all members of the sub-clan, wherever they may be living, Tongo is their home, the centre of gravity of their social existence.

We have said before that no two Tale settlements are exactly alike. Allowing for specific differences, however, the local and social circumscription of Tongo may be taken as typical. The general rule is that boundaries exist in terms of social cleavages co-ordinated with residential distribution, and not of geographical or topographical features; and this rule applies both to the spatial relations of contiguous settlements and to those of parts of a settlement with one another. Community and locality cannot be dissociated. The maxim, 'A *tɛŋ* is not a *tɛŋ* if there are no people in it', always cited to explain the strong sense of ethical obligation felt by the natives to accept a suitable immigrant in any community, if land is available, sums this up. The boundary disputes that have become common between chiefs and headmen in recent years turn on the contradiction between the conception of a defined territorial boundary fostered by British rule, and the type of social boundary inherent in the native social structure.

A revealing case occurred among the Hill Talis. The elaborate interlocking of the Hill Talis clans with one another through clanship ties, ritual collaboration, local cohesion, and political loyalties, and the diffused solidarity to which this gives rise, impel them to common or mutually supporting action in crises. Yet even among them, social boundaries divide clan from clan and maximal lineage from maximal lineage both spatially and structurally, and come into operation in certain situations. But these social boundaries are far less firm than those between Tongo and its neighbours. Groups of contiguous clans cohere to nearly the same extent as a genealogically organic community like Tongo. Tɛnzugu, in particular, and Yinduuri-Zandoya, form two such close-knit sub-communities within the wider community of all the Hill Talis.

Since 1936 a boundary dispute has embittered the relations of the Golibdaana and the Yinduurna'aba, who are recognized by the Administration as headman of Tɛnzugu and headman of Yinduur-Zandoya respectively. It is an insoluble dispute, bound to remain a chronic source of friction as long as these two headmen exercise the territorially defined powers entrusted to them by the Administration.

The dispute concerns a segment of Zandoya living on the slope of the Hills between Yinduuri and Tɛnzugu. It was at length, after many evasions on the Golibdaana's part, brought before the Chief of Tongo for arbitration. But this ended, inevitably, in a deadlock. The Golibdaana, crafty and overweening, as only a man of his extravagant wealth and unyielding temper could be, when he knew himself to be in the wrong, took his stand on a criterion often used by Administrative officers in such disputes. The group in question, he claimed, was living on land that

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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as a form of investment, if such it can be called. Indeed, over most of Taleland the buying and selling of farm-land is ritually prohibited.[1] Occasionally disputes arise between the heirs when farm-lands pass by inheritance. But these rare quarrels are considered to be despicable and are ascribed to idiosyncrasies of character. In any case they are quarrels over the apportionment of joint property and there is always the chance that the man who has come off worst will later inherit the very land he was deprived of.

It is the exact contrary with wives. They form the chief object of competition both between individuals and between corporate groups. This is explicitly admitted in the conventions ruling the abduction of wives and marriage with another man's ex-wife.[2] The prohibition against abducting the wife (or marrying an ex-wife) of a clansman, kinsman, or member of a locally contiguous clan admits the fact that such acts are the most prolific source of strife, leading, in the old days, to bloodshed at times. The corollary that it is permissible, nay, commendable, to abduct the wife of a member of a distant, unrelated clan is an expression of the idea that geographically distant and genealogically unconnected clans have no direct common interests.

Competition for wives always was and still is the chief source of conflict between individuals and groups in Taleland. More than 90 per cent. of all cases brought to chiefs' courts nowadays are concerned with wives, and they are always triangular affairs with two men competing for the woman or her offspring. The reason for this competitive attitude about wives in a society almost devoid of durable goods of great productive or prestige value and possessing few prestige-conferring offices is not difficult to see, as has been previously indicated. Wives are the sole means of attaining the supreme end of life for the natives, the perpetuation and increase of a man's lineage. Like land, which is a common interest to the whole nuclear and often inner lineage, wives are of common interest to all the members of their husbands' lineages (not only their inner lineages, but even their maximal lineages and clans), for all of whom the perpetuation of their line of descent is of transcendent importance. This idea, which is expressed in the principle of the levirate, lies behind many of the institutions we shall be considering in this chapter.

Tallensi maintain that marriageable young women have become much scarcer than a generation ago. They blame the chiefs and headmen, whose new-found wealth enables them to have large harems, thus robbing young men of possible wives. Tallensi say that girls naturally prefer to marry young men, who are more congenial to them sexually and socially, rather than old men, however prosperous or exalted they may be. But a girl cannot easily resist an offer of marriage from a chief

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. xi.
[2] Ibid., ch. iv.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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581 the bridegroom's guardian must send the placation gift (*lu sendaan*)
583 to the bride's guardian, and must pay a proportion of the bride-price
[586] acceptable to the latter. A wife is usually espoused (*sol*) by paying the bride-price of four head of cattle or their equivalent in instalments over a number of years. If he does not fulfil these jural requirements, a man has no rights to and over his wife. On the other hand, women frequently desert husbands who have paid a part or, occasionally, even the whole bride-price. In such a case an honourable man may feel bound to compel his daughter to return to her husband, but if the girl refuses obstinately he may have to yield to her. Often, however, a father prefers his daughter to find another husband from whom he claims the bride-price that has to be refunded to the first husband. And it is not uncommon for men to instigate a daughter to leave her lawful husband for another man, or to take a daughter away from her husband and give her to another man as a means of raising what we should call ready cash or its equivalent—for instance, a cow to repay a pressing debt, or to buy grain for the household. Thus, observance of the jural proprieties gives a husband a weapon with which he can try to assert his rights to and over his wife. It does not give him an absolute guarantee of these rights nor does it ensure the stability of the marriage.

582 A girl's parents, and especially her father, can make or mar a marriage.
593 Young people may wed without their fathers' consent, but they cannot remain legitimately married without it. If a man objects to a son-in-law he usually succeeds in exercising his right to take his daughter away, though cases are numerous in which the woman has persistently returned to the rejected husband, who has had to be accepted in the end. By contrast, if a father has himself chosen or likes his daughter's husband, he is a strong ally. He can force the girl, beating her if necessary, to stay with her husband, though here again fathers have been known to fail with obdurate daughters. Generally, however, the strength of
[789] paternal authority makes a father's command irresistible; for he might curse an intractable daughter, and this is greatly dreaded.

583 Again, a woman will not stay with a husband who does not pay at least a portion of the bride-price. It is an insult to her, placing her on
●691 the level of a casual lover and exposing her to the taunts of her co-wives of the lineage. Pukiehət's wife was taken from him five times because he could not pay anything towards her bride-price; every time she came back. At length her guardian brought a case against Pukiehət. The chief put it to her that Pukiehət was, in effect, treating both her and her guardian with contempt. Sadly she admitted this and agreed to leave him if he did not meet the debt at once. Pukiehət saw he was in danger of losing his wife. He was a poor man; but he set to work energetically and managed to raise the equivalent of two cows, which was enough to satisfy his father-in-law.

586 Even a fruitful marriage, the strongest of all bonds between husband

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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This case, typical of dozens that occur every day among the Tallensi, shows how the motif of duty and the motif of reciprocity are intertwined. This appears still more clearly when 'father' and 'son' farm separately. Thus Sayabo of Kpata'ar was Nyaaŋzum's late half-brother's son. He occupied the same homestead as Nyaaŋzum, but separate quarters with an independent gateway and farm for himself. When Sayabo abducted a Gorogo man's wife, the injured husband, supported by his father-in-law, brought a case against Sayabo at the chief's court. Nyaaŋzum, together with Sayabo and almost all the other men of their inner lineage, went to answer the suit. Nyaaŋzum's defence was simple and straightforward. He knew of no bar to the marriage. They had no kinship ties with the girl's paternal kin, nor clanship ties with Gorogo. In former times Kpata'ar men and Gorogo men had not hesitated to abduct one another's wives. He was ready to pay the bride-price at once if the 'owner of the child (*biiraan*)'—that is the girl's jural guardian in this case, the father—agreed. The latter, however, refused to accept Sayabo as a son-in-law, so she was returned to her first husband and Nyaaŋzum forfeited his hearing fee of three shillings. Incidentally, this fee was made up of a shilling contributed by Sayabo, a shilling from Nyaaŋzum, and a shilling from another member of the inner lineage.

Why was Nyaaŋzum so ready to accept the responsibility for Sayabo's marriage and to answer for him at court, seeing that Sayabo was not farming with him? In the first place it was his duty as Sayabo's proxy father; and being a man of principle he would not evade such a duty. Even if he disapproved of the young man's behaviour he must answer for it in public, and he was under a jural obligation to pay the bride-price for the youth's wife, from his own resources if need be. In fact, however, he would not have offered to pay the bride-price with such alacrity if it were a question of using his own resources, for he had his own sons to think of. Another factor came into the situation, as Nyaaŋzum himself explained to me.

When Sayabo's father, Nyaaŋzum's half-brother Galəmoyar, died, Nyaaŋzum inherited a number of cattle from him. Some were cattle Galəmoyar had received as bride-price for a younger sister of his and Nyaaŋzum's. These cattle accrued to the *faar*, the patrimonial property, in the strict sense; Nyaaŋzum was entitled to dispose of them as he pleased since he was the last of his father's sons. In addition, Galəmoyar's herd included cattle he had himself bought or had received in payment of his daughters', Sayabo's sisters', bride-price. As Sayabo was still only a boy, Nyaaŋzum took possession of these cattle too. In theory he could dispose of them as he pleased. In practice Sayabo had a prior right to them, since they were his father's own earnings and his sisters' bride-price animals, and Nyaaŋzum had merely a nominal over-right. Nyaaŋzum had utilized most of these cattle for his own purposes; but he considered himself morally bound to make an equivalent return